
Wachau (Austria) No 970bis

1 Basic information

State Party

Austria

Name of property

Wachau Cultural Landscape

Location

Federal Province of Lower Austria

Inscription

2000

Brief description

The Wachau is a stretch of the Danube Valley between Melk and Krems, a landscape of high visual quality. It preserves in an intact and visible form many traces - in terms of architecture, (monasteries, castles, ruins), urban design, (towns and villages), and agricultural use, principally for the cultivation of vines - of its evolution since prehistoric times.

Date of ICOMOS approval of this report

13 March 2024

2 Issues raised

Background

The property was inscribed on the World Heritage List in 2000 under criteria (ii) and (iv). The Wachau Cultural Landscape is recognised as an outstanding example of a riverine landscape which contains material evidence from a long historical evolution, particularly characterised by medieval settlements and vineyards that have evolved organically and harmoniously over time. The property consists of the area of the Danube Valley between the town of Krems in the north east and the town of Melk in the south west. Monasteries, castles, ruins, towns and villages and vineyards are found along the valley.

The map submitted with the nomination dossier was first drawn by hand and then re-drawn by GIS system in use in 1999 by the Nature Protection Department of the Federal State Government of Lower Austria. Both of these maps used the Austrian Base Map scale 1:200,000, showing some inaccuracies. The digital map however, is only available as a paper copy, while the digital files created at the time, are not at disposal.

In 2009, the Austrian Environmental Impact Assessment Act (UVP-G) was modified, taking into account World Heritage properties as special protected areas (*besonderes Schutzgebiet*). Any proposed development

needs therefore to be located precisely as whether it is within or outside of a World Heritage property.

For this reason, it is necessary that the map of the World Heritage property follows the Austrian Cadastral Map based on legally binding property limits. The World Heritage site managers of the Wachau were requested by the Federal State Government of Lower Austria to transfer the existing World Heritage boundaries to the cadastral map, which was done as closely as possible to the original map of the inscribed property. This version of the map was used as the reference for the boundary modification done in 2016 in the process of drafting a new management plan for the World Heritage property.

Modification

Through a minor boundary modification request, the State Party presents the result of the revision of the boundaries developed in 2016 during the drafting of the new management plan of the property. During this process, some unclear situations were resolved, with boundaries adapted to more recent conservation plans, resulting in the widening of the property at the cost of the buffer zone.

The property area has been increased from 18,387 ha to 18,462 ha, and the buffer zone has been reduced from 2,942 ha to 2,837 ha.

All boundaries have been shifted to existing cadastral limits based on the current version of the Digital Cadastral Map of Austria where feasible.

In the area of the Municipality of Mautern, the property has been enlarged to include the historic Mautern Bridge and the historic city centre of Mautern, following the boundaries of a specialized development plan which aims at safeguarding the historic built environment of Mautern.

In the town of Melk, the former Seminary of the Bishop and the railway station, including part of the railway line and houses lying between the old branch of the Danube and the railway, were all integrated into the property. In contrast, an area close to the city centre and east of Hummelstrasse have been removed from the property boundaries and included in the buffer zone instead, as they are considered not to contribute to the Outstanding Universal Value of the property.

In addition, a small area of the Municipality of Dunkelsteinerwald which comprises only forest has been retained within the property. The Municipality of Dunkelsteinerwald has then been integrated into the management structure of the World Heritage property.

Modifications have been discussed with relevant stakeholders including the Director for the Built Heritage of the City of Krems, and the City Government and officer-in charge of the World Heritage in the Federal State of Lower Austria.

A World Heritage site manager was officially established in 2017, in charge of administrating an association which is controlled by fifteen municipalities of the property and buffer zone, and the World Heritage Advisory Board, which includes the Austrian Federal Ministry of Arts,

Culture, Public Service and Sports, the Federal State Government of Lower Austria, and the fifteen municipalities. Representatives of the fifteen municipalities meet regularly to discuss about conservation and development of the cultural landscape.

ICOMOS notes that in the process of revising the boundaries of both the property and buffer zone, some areas that were within the property are now part of the buffer zone, and some parts that were within the buffer zone are now not part of it. In its proposal, the State Party ensures that all attributes of Outstanding Universal Value are now contained within the property boundaries, as in some cases, this revision implied, including within the boundaries, some potential attributes that were instead located within the buffer zone in the previous map. In addition, ICOMOS observes that Environmental Impact Assessments are in place, considering World Heritage properties as specially protected areas.

Therefore, ICOMOS considers that the proposed clarification of boundaries with the revised map will better support the management of the World Heritage property and its buffer zone.

3 Recommendations

Recommendations with respect to inscription

ICOMOS recommends that the proposed minor modification to the boundary of Wachau Cultural Landscape, Austria, be **approved**.

ICOMOS recommends that the proposed minor modification to the boundary of the buffer zone for Wachau Cultural Landscape, Austria, be **approved**.

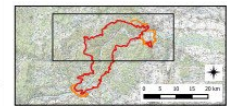
Additional recommendations

ICOMOS further recommends that the State Party give consideration to the following:

- a) Informing the World Heritage Centre of the intention to undertake or authorise all major projects which may affect the Outstanding Universal Value of the property, in line with paragraph 172 of the *Operational Guidelines for the Implementation of the World Heritage Convention*,
- b) Developing and implementing a Heritage Impact Assessment for any development proposals in the property, its buffer zone and/or wider setting that could potentially affect the Outstanding Universal Value of the property.



WORLD HERITAGE
Wachau Cultural Landscape (770)



Property as modified
Buffer zone as modified

Scale (map): 1:50,000

Coordinate system:

EPSG: 31466 - MZ / Austria GK MZ4

Map data: Geoportalkarte, 2018-2022; Mapbox; © Bundesamt für Statistik und Informationssysteme, 2018-2022; Cartography: unknown user, © Michael Schmidt, 1993, © 1998 Telenor



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Maps showing the revised boundaries of the property and of the buffer zone (February 2024)